

Alonzo E. Bell diary (Mf. P. 48.1)

<<Page 112>> Tuesday, Dec. 24, 1861

Weather cold. Snow upon the ground though not very deep. Ground frozen. It begins to look a little like Christmas. A great many packages were brought today: apples, raisins and eggs, cakes, etc. for to make a Christmas dinner for the men. But what difference in Christmas here and Christmas at home! For my part I feel very indifferent about the matter so far as eating is concerned. But suppose we had as well be merry as sad.

Another company arrived today. Long John Wentworth (as he is called) arrived here today on a visit to Col. Dimick. He is an abolitionist of the Greeley manner & Philips school.

Night – Christmas Eve! How many tender memories come up the thought of Christmas Eve?

How many little stockings will be hung up in the corners tonight for Santa Claus to fill. What sweet shew of toys, candys, etc. that old Santa Claus will bring for his favorites?

<<Page 113>> Wednesday, Dec. 25, 1861

Christmas Day. And I would say a Merry Christmas to all! But who could say that when he was a prisoner in the hands of his enemies?

Today thousands of religious devotees will assemble and chant forth pealing anthems and praises to the most high and yet the whole country is convulsed in the throws of a revolution in which brother is engaged against brother, father against son, friend against friend. What a strange anomaly is man? What an inconsistency?

The steamer brought a great many presents in the shape of turkeys, oyster cakes, and etc. The generosity of kind friendly ladies to the prisoners. Christmas was kept up among the prisoners in the same manner as at home. Many of our men actually got intoxicated. The officers were up early in the morning stirring eggnog.

Our boys have had a merry day of it. Singing, fiddling, sliding on the ice, etc., were resorted to – all seemed merry as <<Page 114>> a “marriage bell.” The Yankees looked on in astonishment when he saw our table set for dinner. He had eaten but one piece bread during the day and he thought it strange he said that our fellows could have Lager enough to get drunk on when he could not even get a drink. They are very surprised at the feeling existing shown between our officers and men. They see there is a vast difference in our treatment of them and that of the Federals.

Our boys frequently talk with them and have a great deal of sport with them. We had a fine dinner. The bill of fare consisting of turkey, beef, butter, coffee, biscuits, mince pie, cakes, wine, etc. A great deal of this was sent us by a young lady of N. Jersey. We call her “Little Jersey.”

The officers were so well pleased with the dinner that they gave 3 cheers for “Little Jersey.” All seemed in high glee. But for the life of me I could not feel like Christmas. I was too, too, far from my loved ones.